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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A fuel cap device for closing an inlet of a rearwardly located automobile fuel tank, comprising:

a substantially cylindrical closer for closing said inlet,

5 and

an operating portion formed on an upper part of said closer, wherein:

said operating portion comprises a projection passing through a center of the upper part of said closer and bridging  
10 in a radial direction;

said operation portion being rotatable to thereby engage said projection with said closer, and said closer with said inlet when said closer is inserted into said inlet;

said operating portion being positioned when said  
15 operating portion is rotated until said closer is in a fully engaged state with said inlet such that said operating portion transmits to said closer a torque in an engaging direction of rotation when an external rear impact force acts on said operating portion;

20 a longitudinal orientation of said operating portion is at an angle more than  $90^\circ$  and  $180^\circ$  when the closer is in the fully engaged state with said inlet; and

a relative orientation of said operating portion and said closer in a non-torqued state after said closer closes said  
25 inlet remains a predetermined angle.

2. A fuel cap device according to claim 1,

said closer including a cover portion on which said operation portion is formed, a closer main body for closing  
5 said inlet, and a torque mechanism for connecting said cover and said closer main body so as to rotate relatively therebetween,

wherein said cover portion and said closer main body are retained having a predetermined relative angle with each other  
10 after said closer closes said inlet.

3. A fuel cap device according to claim 1, wherein:

said closer includes a cover portion on which said operating portion is formed, a closer main body for closing  
15 said inlet, and a torque mechanism for connecting said cover and said closer main body;

said torque mechanism includes:

a cover side retaining part provided in said cover portion;

a plate side retaining part provided in a torque plate,  
20 retaining with said cover side retaining part;

a guiding part provided in said torque plate, accommodating a main body side retaining part; and

said main body side rib provided on said closer main body and transmitting to said closer main body a torque subjected  
25 to said operating portion;

wherein said cover side retaining part and said plate side retaining part define:

a retained state wherein said cover side retaining part is retained with said plate side retaining part supported by  
5 said main body side rib when a torque lower than a first predetermined torque is subjected in said operating portion in the closing direction of said closer;

a first switching state where said cover side retaining part moves beyond said plate side retaining part supported by  
10 said main body side rib, when the first predetermined or higher torque is subjected to said operating portion in the closing direction of said closer; and

a second switching state where said cover side retaining part moves beyond the plate side retaining part released from  
15 said main body side rib, when a second predetermined torque or higher is subjected to said operating portion in the opening direction of said closer.

4. A fuel cap device according to claim 3,  
20 wherein said first predetermined torque is higher than said second predetermined torque.

5. A fuel cap device according to claim 3,  
said torque mechanism further including means for urging  
25 said cover portion and said closer main body against a relative

rotation therebetween.

6. A fuel cap device according to claim 5,

5 wherein said urging means provides a torque less than said second predetermined torque in the opening direction of said closer, so that said cover portion and said closer main body are retained having a predetermined relative angle with each other after said closer closes said inlet.

10 7. A fuel cap device according to claim 5,

wherein said urging means provides said second predetermined torque or higher in the opening direction of said closer, so that said cover portion returns to an initial relative position with respect to said closer main body after said closer  
15 closes the inlet.

8. A fuel cap device for closing an inlet of an automobile fuel tank, comprising:

a substantially cylindrical closer for closing said inlet,  
20 and

an operating portion formed on an upper part of said closer,  
wherein:

said operation portion comprises a projection passing through a center of the upper part of said closer and bridging  
25 in a radial direction; and

said operating portion being rotatable to engage said projection with said closer, and said closer with said inlet, and said operating portion is oriented with respect to a horizontal rearward direction in an operation wherein said  
5 operating portion is positioned such completed state so that said operating portion transmits to said closer a torque turning in the closing direction when a rear external force extend in a forward direction is received at an outer peripheral edge of said an external force exerting from the rear part of the  
10 automobile to the front part is received at an outer peripheral edge of said operating portion situated in a rearmost part of the automobile.

9. A fuel cap device adapted for an automobile body  
15 comprising:

an inlet connected to a fuel tank;

a substantially cylindrical closer for closing said inlet;

an operating portion formed on an upper portion of said  
20 closer for bringing said closer to an engaged position with said inlet when said operating portion is rotated to an angle between  $90^\circ$  and  $180^\circ$  relative to a longitudinal orientation, wherein said operating portion includes a projection passing through a center of an upper part of said closer and bridging  
25 in a radial direction;

a torque mechanism structurally coupled to said operating portion by at least said projection, wherein said torque mechanism is for permitting said operating portion to transmit to said closer a torque turning in a closing direction when  
5 an external force exerted from the rear part of the automobile body to the front part is received at an outer peripheral edge of said operating portion.

10. A fuel cap device for closing an inlet of a rearwardly  
10 located automobile fuel tank, comprising:

a substantially cylindrical closer including both a cover portion and a closer main body for closing the inlet, the cover portion and the closer main body having a predetermined relative orientation therebetween;

15 a downwardly extending projection formed on and passing through a center of the cover portion of the closer, the cover portion being rotatable upon application of a rotational force to the projection, thereby causing the closer to engage with the inlet when inserted therein;

20 a torque mechanism for connecting the cover portion and the closer main body through the projection so as to enable continued rotation of the cover portion even when the closer main body is in a fully engaged state with the inlet and cannot be further rotated; and

25 a spring mechanism located between the cover portion and

the closer main body for causing the cover portion to return to the predetermined relative orientation with the closer main body when the cover portion is rotated past a position corresponding to the fully engaged state of the closer main body with the inlet and when the rotational force is no longer applied to the projection.

11. The fuel cap device of claim 10, wherein the operating portion is longitudinally oriented at an angle of more than 90° and less than 180° when rotated until the closer main body is in a fully engaged position with the inlet to enable the operating portion to transmit to the closer main body a torque in an inlet engaging direction of rotation when an external rear impact force acts on the operating portion.

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12. The fuel cap device of claim 10, wherein the torque mechanism comprises:

a cover side retaining part provided on the cover portion;

a torque plate including a plate side retaining part for engaging the cover side retaining part, and a guiding part for accommodating a closer main body side rib provided on the closer main body, and for transmitting to the closer main body the rotational force applied to the projection;

wherein the cover side retaining part and the plate side retaining part define



a retained state wherein the cover side retaining part is retained with the plate side retaining part supported by the closer main body side rib when the rotational force is lower than a first predetermined torque is applied to the projection  
5 in the inlet engaging direction;

a first switching state where the cover side retaining part is rotated beyond the plate side retaining part supported by the main body side rib, when the rotational force applied to the projection is greater than or equal to a predetermined  
10 force; and

a second switching state where the cover side retaining part is rotated beyond the plate side retaining part released from the main body side rib, when the rotational force applied to the projection is less than the predetermined force.  
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13. The fuel cap device of claim 3, wherein the torque mechanism is further for generating a moderation click when the cover side retaining part moves from the first switching state to the second switching state.

20 14. The fuel cap device of claim 8, further comprising a torque mechanism located between said closer and said operating portion for enabling said operating portion to be further rotated even after said closer is in a fully engaged state with the inlet;

25 and

a spring mechanism in communication with said operating portion for enabling a relative orientation of said operating portion and said closer in a non-torqued state to remain constant.

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15. The fuel cap device of claim 14, wherein said torque mechanism is further for providing moderation when said operating portion is further rotated even after said closer is in a fully engaged state with the inlet.

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16. The fuel cap device of claim 9, wherein said torque mechanism is further for enabling said operation portion to be further rotated even after said closer is in a fully engaged state with the inlet.

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17. The fuel cap device of claim 16, further comprising a spring mechanism in communication with said operating portion for enabling a relative orientation of said operating portion and said closer in a non-torqued state to remain constant.

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18. The fuel cap device of claim 17, wherein said torque mechanism is further providing moderation when said operating portion is further rotated even after said closer is in a fully engaged state with the inlet.

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